DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 158 474 EC 111 849

AUTHOR Parker, Linda G.; Mohr, Laura L.
TITLE Secondary Handicapped Students? I Thought They Were All Cured!
PUB DATE Jun 78
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the World Congress on Future Special Education (First, Stirling, Scotland, June 25 - July 1, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Education; *Gifted; *Handicapped Children; Higher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; Post Secondary Education; *Practicums; Program Descriptions; *Summer Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Experience a Practicum with Exceptional Children

ABSTRACT

Experience a Practicum with Exceptional Children (EPEC), university lecture courses and practicum experience within a local school district, offered field-based teacher education on the needs of handicapped students. The EPEC summer program recruited elementary students who were gifted, learning disabled, educable mentally retarded, mildly orthopedically handicapped, and speech/language handicapped. Responses from the student and parent evaluation sheets favored the continuation of such a training program for teachers. (SBH)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

195 #8

AUG 3 1978

ED158474

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

# Secondary Handicapped Students? I Thought They Were All Cured!

Linda G. Parker

University of South Carolina

Laura L. Mohr

Horry County School District

©

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C.E.C.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Running head: Secondary Handicapped Students?

EC 111843

**Abstract**

One way through which people can be educated concerning the needs of handicapped students is through university courses. Another training method is field-based teacher education with first-hand experiences with students of varying abilities. University lecture courses and practicum experience within a local school district can be a unique combination of the best of both. Such a project in a resort area can be appealing to local educators as well as others within the region. "Experience a Practicum with Exceptional Children" (EPEC) was such an endeavor where the university provided the technical assistance and lecturers and the local district provided the facilities and the students.

# Secondary Handicapped Students?
# I Thought They Were All Cured!

Teachers who presently work in secondary schools are either unaware that mildly handicapped students are in their classes or what problems really exist concerning these students. Most often these teachers label the students as slow, lazy, unmotivated, or troublemakers. One state department consultant in curriculum development was overheard telling a group of teachers that "any student with normal intelligence cannot be reading on a third grade level." Such a statement was made due to being misinformed. Information, as well as misinformation, is perpetuated by word of mouth. In order to decrease the number of educators who are unaware of the problems of the handicapped, training institutions must approach training through a different avenue.

When trainers meet with school district leaders concerning competencies of teachers, one common complaint is that the education faculty and courses are not practically oriented. Statements such as this led to a cooperative three year program in the state of South Carolina.

The Program for Exceptional Children, College of Education of the University of South Carolina is, like all teacher training institutions committed to quality training for all teachers. One aspect that had not been tapped through the various campuses of the University of South Carolina system was personnel preparation in conjunction with

a local school district.

The Horry County School District serves approximately 20,000 school age children, with approximately 3,000 handicapped students. In 1975 a Coordinator of Programs for the Handicapped was employed. Upon completion of a survey of teachers working with exceptional students, it was discovered that many teachers of the handicapped were not fully certified in the areas of handicapped students served.

Horry County, geographically the largest county in South Carolina, is primarily a rural and agricultural county, with a summer tourist industry at Myrtle Beach. Since the University of South Carolina and other teacher training institutions for Special Education are located long distances from Horry County, teachers have limited access to courses offered in the education of exceptional children.

The University of South Carolina has nine campuses located throughout the state. The third largest of its campuses is the Coastal Carolina College in Conway, South Carolina. A few graduate courses in the area of exceptional children had been taught on the Coastal Campus on a single course request basis. However, both the University of South Carolina, Programs for Exceptional Children Faculty and the Horry County School District, Programs for the Handicapped Staff, felt that both lecture type courses and first-hand experiences must be provided to adequately train the person to teach handicapped students. Thus, the idea of a summer training project developed.

It was anticipated that both local and regional residents would participate in the personnel preparation idea. One problem was that

there were no funds available to staff a school during the summer so that a practicum site would be readily available. "Experience A Practicum with Exceptional Children" was conceived and operated the first year without financial assistance from any agency other than the University of South Carolina and the Horry County School District.

For the 1976 "EPEC" program Myrtle Heights Elementary School in Myrtle Beach was selected. The principal had been an avid supporter of education of special needs learners and hardily supported the summer school located in his building. Lecture courses were conducted from 7:30 A.M. to 8:45 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. to 1:45 P.M. Summer school for children ages 6 to 12 operated from 9 A.M. to 12:00 Noon. The entire program operated for eight weeks with children enrolled for seven of those weeks. An in-service program provided on-going consultants in four areas at various times during the summer program. The consultants worked both with teachers and with children to implement recommendations.

Children were recruited primarily from the Myrtle Beach area since transportation was not provided. Parents paid a small tuition fee for their children to attend. The tuition fees were used to pay for the consultants who visited, snacks for the children and for all consumables used during summer school. The Horry County School District provided the building, its maintenance, all hardware, and non-consumable educational materials. The instructors for the courses were university faculty and/or local adjunct faculty. The lead teachers for the practicum were advanced graduate students who were awarded graduate assistantships for the summer. Three assistantships were awarded and approximately

40 children were enrolled in the summer school. The children accepted as students during the first year included some gifted students, normal students, learning disabled students, educable mentally retarded students, mild orthopedically handicapped, and speech/language handicapped students. It was the intent of the program to offer a setting where all children were served in the least restrictive environment for each child. For some students the setting was one to one instruction. For others, a near normal classroom was maintained. For other students, small group instruction was utilized.

At the completion of the first year "EPEC" was included as a portion of the Program for Exceptional Children's Bureau Education of the Handicapped teacher preparation grant proposal. The grant was partially funded with the funds being utilized for transportation of children from other areas of the county, school health services, lunches, lead teachers with master's degrees, and stipends for teachers interested in the concept of mainstreaming for the handicapped student.

"EPEC" expanded to two five-week summer sessions. During the first session, held at Coastal Carolina Campus, intensive minicourses were conducted to introduce teachers to mainstreaming, exceptional children, in general, and specifically to the areas of mental retardation, learning disabilities and emotional handicaps. Courses in assessment of exceptional children and counseling parents of exceptional children were also taught.

The second five-week session was planned with the idea that materials and teaching strategies are most easily understood when demonstrated

with children. Myrtle Beach Grade School was selected as the site due to cooperation and acceptance by the school's principal. Practicum classrooms were the medium for the laboratory experiences, which included the development of Individual Educational Plans (IEP's). Sixty children ages 4 to 12 with a wide variety of profiles were enrolled. All phases of a school day were included from reading to recess and fractions to field-trips. The responses of the graduate students, parents and children encouraged the continuation of the project for the third year.

The 1978 "EPEC" was again conducted in two phases. The first five-seek session was planned with lecture type courses conducted on the Coastal Carolina Campus and the second five-week session was practically oriented with boys and girls involved at Conway Elementary School, a school which had previously demonstrated acceptance of the handicapped student in its regular program. The Conway site also allowed participation from more students in the upper rural areas of the county.

The seventy children enrolled for "EPEC-1978" were ages 3 to 12 years and included a wide variety of individuals such as gifted, autistic-like, blind, retarded, orthopedically handicapped, learning disabled, emotionally handicapped, in addition to normal children. The children also served as the practice cases for a Coastal Carolina course taught in adaptive physical education. The school day provided for physical education, arts and crafts, music, academics, affective behavior and social learning skills, and library time. School health services and transportation were also available. The teachers developed IEP's and IEP implementation into daily plans for each child. One measure of the applicability of

of the daily plan was demonstrated when substitues took over for a day of teacher in-service. The in-service program was a continuation of consultant availability.

## Conclusions

From the student evaluation and parent evaluation sheets the responses have favored the continuation of such a training program for teachers. Since summer is the only time when full-time teachers can devote to continuing education, such a method for showcasing the needs of all children seems appropriate. Not only have special needs students been served but teachers, both regular and special education, have become more competent in serving their students. A teacher competency survey was utilized to measure growth.

One benefit derived by having teachers of the handicapped work within a mainstreamed setting dealing with non-handicapped students is knowledge of how it feels to be responsible for individual planning for so many different types of students. Hopefully, the empathy gained by the special needs teacher will carry over to his/her job in the fall. Communication between all teachers involved with special needs students should increase. As school districts and teacher training institutions increase their dialog and planning, complaints concerning poor teacher training, unrealistic expections and fault-finding will decrease. Educators of all levels need to become cognizant that most handicapped students are not cured, but they do learn to compensate!